

Shoreline Master Programs

Storming the South Sound, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge

What are Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs)?

- Required by the voter approved Shoreline Management Act of 1972 (Revised Code of Washington 90.58).
- Part of local zoning and land use regulations.
- Used to plan for and regulate shoreline protection and restoration, public access, use and development.
- Tailored to local shorelines and community needs – respecting that local communities are important users and stewards of their shorelines.
- Must meet state laws and rules that ensure local programs reflect values held in common by all Washington citizens.
- Must be updated or amended with public input.

Over 260 towns, cities and counties are required by the Shoreline Management Act to have local programs. Because many of the programs have not been fully updated for over 30 years, the 2003 state legislature required these local governments to fully (comprehensively) update their shoreline programs by 2014. This means your town, city or county likely has to update their shoreline program. Most updates take 2-3 years to complete. Some updates are done, and others are underway or will be soon.

Public Participation Tips

Public participation is vital to good shoreline programs. The following steps include the most common options to get involved in local shoreline planning or permitting. Check with your city or county to find out all your options.

1. Find out if your town, city or county is currently updating your local SMP.

- Some cities and counties are done with updates, others are underway or not yet started. Contact your local planning department and ask if it is updating the SMP. If yes, ask for the planner in charge of the SMP and let them know you want to be kept informed. Some local planner contacts:

City of Olympia - Cari Hornbein - (360) 753-8048
City of Tumwater - Tim Smith - (360) 754-4210
Thurston County - Cindy Wilson - (360) 786-5475
City of University Place - Jeff Boers - (253) 460-5410
City of Lakewood - Marc Amrine - (253) 983-7753
Town of Steilacoom - Doug Fortner - (253) 983-2084
Lewis County - Jerry Basler - (360) 740-1389

2. Comment on the Public Participation Plan.

- Local governments must create a public participation plan with broad public input. This plan defines your opportunity to be involved. If the plan has not already been written, make sure and provide input.

3. Sign up for notices.

- Ask to be added to the list of people receiving notices about the local SMP update or permits.
 - *Local governments use this list to send notices about changes, public meetings, review and comment periods, tours, etc.*
 - *This list is also used by the Washington Department of Ecology to notify the public when an updated SMP or permit is going through state approval. If you are on the list, you will be notified of this additional chance to review and comment your local shoreline program or permits.*

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4. Provide input to your local SMP update in many ways.

- Talk or write to the local planner and share what you know about local shorelines.
 - *Have you observed wildlife nests or dens? Do you want to revegetate your subdivision's waterfront? Is there a special fishing spot you'd like better access to? Do you have shoreline photos of historic uses and development?*
- Provide written comments (via letter or email) on draft reports and documents.
 - *Make sure you meet the deadline and any other requirements. If you want your comments well understood, make sure they are clear and specific to the document you are reviewing.*
- Join a technical advisory committee created by your local government.
 - *Local governments are required to seek technical advice from experts in water quality, watersheds, fish and wildlife, geology, and other fields. These experts often work for state and federal agencies – but can also work with local volunteer organizations.*
- Join a citizen advisory committee created by your local government.
 - *This is a long-term, rewarding, volunteer opportunity which may last for 2-3 years. Members of advisory committees represent segments of the larger population rather than just their own interests. They should be good listeners and willing to gather input from their neighbors, businesses, and other community members.*
- Attend citizen advisory and technical committee meetings.
 - *Even if you don't have time to participate on a committee – committee meetings are open to the public and are usually where the bulk of decisions are made. They are a great chance to learn more about shoreline issues and provide input throughout the process.*
- Attend public meetings (e.g. hearings, workshops, open houses).
 - *Attending public meetings is a great way to learn and provide input. These are opportunities to talk one-on-one with the planner and shoreline experts. Displays or other materials are available. You usually may provide written comment in lieu of attending a meeting.*

5. Review and comment on shoreline permits.

- Local permits are required for certain kinds of shoreline development. You can find out when these development permits are filed with your town, city or county and comment on them. More:
www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/smp/st_guide/administration/index.html

For more information

- Shoreline Master Programs – Citizen Guide, Shoreline Planners Toolbox, Permits and Enforcement
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/shorelines/smp/index.html>
SMP Updates subpage (status of SMPs and links to local web sites):
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/smp/status.html>
- Shoreline Data and Information
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/data/index.html>
- Relevant Laws
Chapter 90.58 RCW: Shoreline Management Act
Chapter 173-26 WAC: Shoreline Master Program “Guidelines”
- Washington Coastal Atlas (shoreline access locations)
<http://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/coastalatlas/>